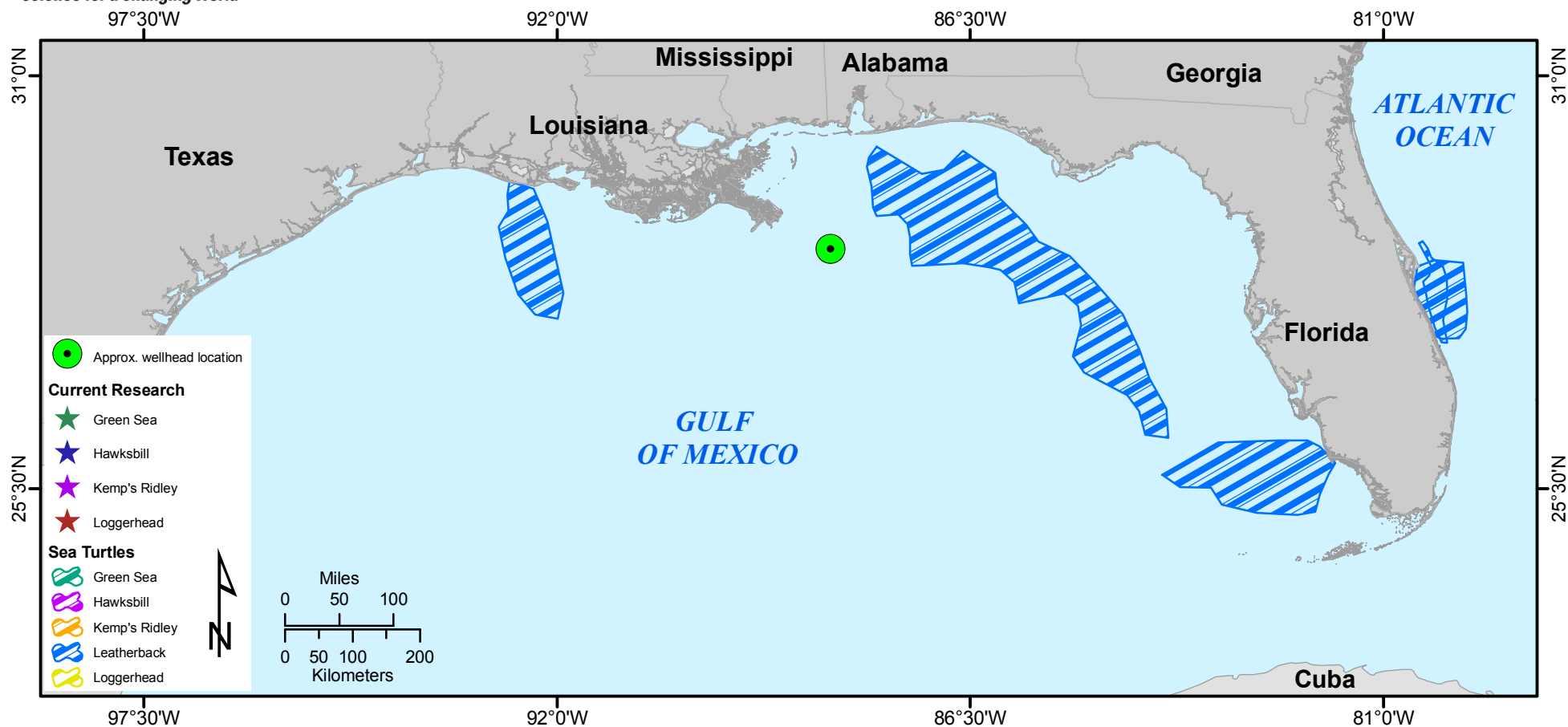


U.S. Gulf of Mexico Sea Turtle Habitat Areas

Leatherback



Five species of sea turtles are found in Gulf waters, all of which are either threatened or endangered. Prime nesting season for sea turtles is May through October. Green sea turtles consume seagrasses and algae, loggerheads forage benthically and consume crustaceans and fish, leatherbacks eat primarily jellyfish, and Kemp's ridleys are normally bottom-feeders, consuming crabs and other benthic fauna. USGS is currently conducting sea turtle sampling on juvenile greens and adult loggerheads in Everglades National Park and on several life stages of loggerheads, greens, and hawksbills in Dry Tortugas National Park. The work in the Dry Tortugas is supported by both the Coral Reef Ecosystem Studies Project (CREST) and the Priority Ecosystem Studies (PES) Program. The map depicts locations of current sea turtle sampling projects (stars) and polygons showing results of previous sea turtle tracking projects by species in relation to the BP Deepwater Horizon oil wellhead. Also shown are results from previous aerial surveys to document sea turtle presence in the Gulf and Atlantic coastal areas. Polygons may include locations for more than one turtle, and nesting sites are often used by several species of sea turtles.

This map is preliminary, for informational purposes only.

- Data Sources:
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 4. Norris, J.C., Evens, W.E. and S. Rankin. 2000. An Acoustic Survey of Cetaceans in the Northern Gulf of Mexico. Chapter 5 in: *Cetaceans, sea turtles and seabirds in the northern Gulf of Mexico: distribution, abundance and habitat associations*. Volume II: Technical Report. R.W. Davis, W.E. Evens and B. Wursig editors. U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, by The GulfCet Program, Department of Marine Biology, Texas A&M University at Galveston.
 5. NOAA
 6. USGS